THE CHAPLAIN'S ROLE

IN

CIVIL DISTURBANCE

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I

THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF STUDY

1. This study is prompted by the present lack of any printed material concerning the role of the Chaplain in Civil Disturbance. The author himself, like many other chaplains, found himself involved with a civil disturbance and had to proceed on a "trial and error" basis. (Newark, 1967)

2. This monogram will deal with civil disturbance only in so far as it has direct bearing on the major concern, THE CHAPLAIN OPERATING WITHIN A DISTURBANCE, preparing for such an eventuality, or returning after such an engagement. Further, we shall be particularly concerned with National Guard or Reserve forces, though much here might apply also to regular army forces and their chaplains.

3. It shall be assumed that the reader is already aware of normal staff policy and procedure, chain of command, duties of the chaplain, etc. For further information on Civil Disturbance see FM 19-15 (Miliatry Police, paragraphs on Riot Control), FM 41-10 (Civil affairs Operations, paragraphs on work with populus). In addition, national and state sponsored studies on particular riots may give insight useful to the chaplain.

II

THE MODERN CIVIL DISTURBANCE

1. The modern civil disturbance almost defies definition. It exists when legitimate authroity, operating under local and state law declares it to exist. In one instance this may be after large segments of a city have gone up in flames, in a second when small groups of vandals rove through a small town, while in a third case it may involve students disrupting the normal routines of a campus. The duration of the disturbance may range from hours to weeks, depending once again on determination by local civil authorities. Some civil disturbance may be generally pictured in terms of anarchy and riot, others as instigated, but largely uncontrolled, others as highly controlled and coordinated. Motivation in these disturbances as well as purpose, when purpose exists, may be highly involved politically and psychologically. The chaplain needs to be aware of the forces specifically involved in the civil disturbance he faces if he is to fulfill his mission to the maximum.

2. The role of National Guard and reserve forces is largely determined by civil government, especially at the state level. Federal forces, both reserve and regular army, could be placed on stand-by at the request of a governor. National Guard troops may be committed by a governor under state law, and used in conjunction with policy authorities or federalized and used with the regular army.

Generally, National Guard troops will be committed when existing police are not able to restore order, or may not be able to handle the situation. Civil Law rather than Marshall Law will be in effect. Guardsmen will supplement police authorities and will be directed by some higher authority, usually a combination of civilian, police and military officials. This higher authority will decide on the commitment a d withdrawal of units. In some instances tactics may be perscribed quite completely.

3. The role of the chaplain in a modern civil disturbance will be in some measure determined by these many and complicated factors. These will be explored somewhat in the following paragraphs. He does well to tread cautiously, weigh his words and act carefully. In many ways he enters a combat situation, fraught with many of the same dangers and emotions as combat, but with added dangers and emotions. His services are much needed, but his love must be educated with wisdom.

III

PRE-OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Familiarization.

Special orders exist in those units designated for use in civil disturbance. These orders should be carefully read by the chaplain in all their parts. Most questions in relation to troop disbursement, areas of operation, chain of command etc. will be answered in these special, unit orders.

It is wise for the chaplain to determine if special Branch orders and/or administrative procedure exists. He will do this through his supervising chaplain. Much confusion can be avoided if such information is known in advance.

The chaplain should make himself familiar with the geographical areas into which he might be called. Minimally a map orientation should be made, noting carefully assembly areas, hospital and police facilities, likely scenes of conflict, and direct routes between these places which are expected to be open. If possible an "on the scene" inspection of the area should be made, and notes taken.

Familiarization may also well include gaining knowledge of the people among whom disturbances may arise, their backgrounds, problems, religious orientation, etc. It would be well to be aware of the local clergy in the area, and especially those who are held in esteem by the local people.

Obviously, changes are constantly being made both in the situation faced and standing orders. The Chaplain should take pains to see that he is aware of these as soon as possible.

2. Chaplain SOP

At all levels Chaplain SOPs should be developed and disseminated. At the levels of Division and State Department of Defense SOPs and approved orders making them possible are essential.

Under existing situations it is quite likely that individual companies and battalions may be called up, but not the brigades, regiments and divisions from which they come. In addition, many divisions and brigades cross state lines. Hence we find a situation where thousands of men could be called up without their chaplains, who "belong" to a headquaters not used, or to a different state than the units they serve.

Headquarters above the battalion level, and the senior chaplains involved, should develop orders for command approval insuring that chaplains in sufficient number will be available to serve in civil disturbances. Branch "chain of supervision" should also be clearly set up to cover all contingencies.

At all levels the chaplain should develope, have approved and circulated a general SOP. The chaplain should spell out procedure for services, uses of added chaplains and or civilian clergy, means of contacting the chaplain and any other information which (1) will assist in fast mobilization and (2) make known the use and whereabouts of the chaplain to those he wishes to serve.

3. Troop Training

The potential of action within civil disturbances raises many moral and religious questions we would expect of troops going into a combat situation. Line troops must expect they may both draw fire and return fire. Keeping in mind that most of these men have never been in such a situation before, it is reasonable to expect emotions of fear, anger, etc, and questions about death, killing, fear, etc. In addition, the fact that actions needs be taken against fellow American, often on streeets where the troops grew up, often heightens emotions and raises additional emotional problems and questions. (Especially on race, the American situation, etc.)

The chaplain has historically faced such times and questions as preacher and teacher, through counseling, the homily, discussions, and the Character Guidance Program. The chaplain will do well to use these means now to prepare men for what they may face. In addition to informal discussion and the sermon or homily, we recommend attempts be made to use appropriate aspects of the Character Guidance Program as part of the general training for all troops.

In emphasis of this need for psychological, moral and spiritual preparation, we add only this....

Up to the present National Guard and other army troops have not been the butt of major hostility, and hence they have suffered few casualities. This could very easily change, and casualties soar. Only careful preparation of the whole man will hold a soldier in his position, obedient to his orders. Particularly in a riot situation, just a few men unprepared could spark a panic or a blood bath in the streets.

4. Miscellaneous

The reserve Chaplain because of his civilian responsibilities should play careful plans on the assumption he might be needed at any time for an indeterminate duration. It is wise to have someone available to care for services, etc. at his home church.

The Chaplain will be required to have ready personal equipment for a definite duration, in keeping with the orders of his unit.

Minimally he should be able to continue for one week without normal laundry and other facilities.

He should also have supplies ready and available for quick loading and in sufficient quantity to have services for the men he will be called on to serve. (Remember, this may be many more than in one's regular units)

All chaplains should keep in mind that transportation and communication is extremely important in fulfilling their duties. A 1/4 ton truck with driver and radio is essential! Without these the chaplain may well be cut off from being with his men when they need him the most. MAKE SURE YOU WILL HAVE A DRIVER, TRUCK AND RADIO, AND DON'T LET THEM BE TAKEN AWAY!

Finally, chaplains responsible for supervising Chaplain Assistants should take pains to explain what will be required of them. It is especially important that the assistant, if he serves also as a driver, know the area of operation, routes from key places, and basic procedure if fired upon. Often the chaplain and assistant will be out alone. In such cases it may be wise for the chaplain himself to drive, his assistant being armed. Keep in mind that Civil Disturbances are not developed by signatories of the Geneva Convention! In some instances chaplains may be considered a very appropriate target!

Foolishness should not be confused with bravery. BE CAREFUL!

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OPERATIONAL RESONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAPLAIN

1. Duty to Troops

"The chaplain's duty is to the troops", may be overused, but it is still both true and the basic concern.

A. Services. The senior chaplain involved in the operation will be expected to coordinate religious services for all faiths. This will quite likely involve the use of civilian clergy.

As soon as possible the chaplain should determine the encampment areas and the religious affiliations of the men in those areas. He should also make himself aware of the duty schedules for the units at each "encampment area" of the operation. (Normally 8 hrs. out, 8 hours in). Now he can begin planning services and an itinerary for the clergy and chaplains involved.

The best time for services is immediately prior to a units departure from its base. Men coming in from action are tired and hungry. Rarely do they arrive at the expected time. As in all combat type situation, changes are made quickly and often. The chaplain should make it a point to ask that he be informed of such changes. To the degree possible he should try to leave maximum time between services, in order to compensate for minor delays or advances in schedule, eg. 0800 service may well be moved to 0730 or 0830 if the chaplain has not planned to be miles away for a 0900 service)

B. Counseling: Aside from the specific situations mentioned below, the chaplain can be useful by visiting the men, listening and responding as appropriate. While there is much opportunity for this in the bivouac areas, it seems more appreciated by those manning perimeter guard posts etc, though the long nights.

Such counseling as is done will largely be of an informal nature. Questions will often deal with "how can such things happen in America?" "Should we shoot to kill?" Anger and frustration can be expected, often directed racially or toward a given group (as in the case of students). Troops are at times concerned with what they consider improper action by other troops and civil police. Fear will likely be present, along with fatigue.

C. Emergencies: The chaplain will likely be called on to report emergencies arising at home, to members of the command. The chaplain can often expedite release of the individual and transportation to his home station.

D. Wounded: Casualities in the command should be expected. Depending on the type of situation wounds will range from few and slight, caused by rocks and bottles, to large numbers killed by gunfire. There is reason to believe serious wounds may become more frequent. Accidents are often another cause of casualities.

It is often procedure to deliver the wounded directly to a civil hospital, rather than to aid stations. It is not unusual for the wounded to be treated and then sent directly home. It is imperative that the chaplain be aware of what procedures will be used with the wounded.

Depending on procedure in use, the chaplain may, in the event of high casualties, place himself at the hospital in use, or at the aid station receiving the wounded. He is more likely to be useful here than in the area of the fighting which is usually a wide area with dispersed actions.

It may be the desire of the commander that the chaplain notify the next of kin when serious wounds are received, or there are those killed in action. The chaplain will want to clarify this beforehand so he can take appropriate action.

2. WORK WITH STAFF OFFICERS

The chaplain should keep in mind that many officers have not been exposed either to this type of action, or any hostile fire. Decisions of critical importance, such as returning fire, is often the the hands of unseasoned junior officers.

The chaplain can be useful to these officers as a calming influence. A wise commander may use him on occasion to quietly and "unofficially" talk to and calm an officer in danger of over reacting. Whether or not this occurs largely depends on the relationship between the commander and the chaplain.

3. STAFF AND COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

Because a "mix" from different units will often operate in a given area, the chaplain should not be disturbed if some of the commanders and staff do not know he is present. He should take it upon himself to be sure they know he is there!

The chaplain should verify the fact that the prepared chain of command as exists on paper is functioning. (Last minute changes are not uncommon!)

He should introduce himself through the operation's commander, if not his own commander. He should establish contact with his brandh superior, if one exists during the operation. (A word of caution--Officers and chaplains may be present "unoffically" and this can be confusing, as in the case of a brigade being called up by the state DOD, but not the division staff).

Communications should be open at all times between the staff of the command, the higher headquarters and the chaplain. The chaplain should be very careful to leave word of his whereabouts, and should be in constant radio communication.

4. RELATION TO THE POPULUS: In this area of concern, much depends on the factors involved in the Civil Disturbance.

The chaplain may function best as a channel to the populus through the local clergy of the populus. In terms of aiding the community, enlisting support of those locally who would try to calm the situation, he might be useful.

There is serious doubt that the chaplain can help quiet a crowd by direct appeal. His religious affiliation seems to have little positive affect, and sometimes a directly negative affect. He should not expect his branch insignia to in any sense protect him from mob hostility.

5. MISCELLANEOUS: When at headquarters, the chaplain should if possible locate himself near the medical section, where he can be quickly advised of casualties or violent clashes that might involve casualties. He should try to keep up to date on operations and the relocation of units, etc. Generally he should try to sleep during the day, when action tends to be at a minimum. Evenings tend to bring an action for which he should be ready. The hours from 2300 to 0700 are a good time to visit the men who are on duty.

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POST OPERATIONAL PHASE

1. Reports and Evaluations: As soon as possible after action a general report should be submitted to his supervising chaplain by any chaplain involved in a disturbance. Evaluations and suggestions are useful. A report of the "After Action" variety is normally required by the unit commander.

2. Responsibility To The Troops: The chaplain may well wish to visit those wounded in action well after the action ends. He may wish to see that all is being done for such men through state or federal resources.

He should also be aware that the "scar tissue" of civil disturbances is not limited to those who received physical wounds. He mind and the spirit can be wounded too, new prejudices formed and old ones reinforced. Hopefully the chaplain will not overlook this, but through counseling and preaching set this experience in its proper context. Failing to deal with these feelings among the men not only allows them to become sick human beings, but may also effect their capacity to behave as soldiers in another such experience.